

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please amend the paragraph starting on page 22, line 11, as follows:

Thus, when the signal level of the low frequency component  $r(i, j)$  which is an input level is in an area lower than a predetermined reference level  $L_k$ , the coefficient calculation circuit 11 outputs a contrast correction coefficient  $g(i, j)$  of a fixed value  $g_{\max}$  higher than 1, but when the signal level of the  $f(i, j)$  is in another area equal to or higher than the reference level  $L_k$ , the coefficient calculation circuit 11 output a contrast correction coefficient  $g(i, j)$  which gradually decreases ~~increases~~ to a value  $g_{\min}$  in response to the signal level of the low frequency component  $r(i, j)$ .